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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/703,748	11/01/2000	Jeffrey R. Aamodt	06576.105031	2107
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PERKINS COIE LLP/MSFT P. O. BOX 1247 SEATTLE, WA 98111-1247			BASOM, BLAINE T	
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			2173	

DATE MAILED: 10/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

09/703,748

Applicant(s)

AAMODT ET AL.

Examiner

Blaine Basom

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 19-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                     | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

### **DETAILED ACTION**

This Office action is responsive to the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed under 37 CFR §1.53(d) for the instant application on 8/4/2006. The Applicants have properly set forth the RCE, which has been entered into the application, and an examination on the merits follows herewith.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

The Examiner acknowledges the Applicants' amendments to claims 19, 29, and 35. Regarding the pending claims, the Applicants argue that neither Schanel (U.S. Patent No. 5,704,028 to Schanel et al.) nor Microsoft Project 98 ("Using Microsoft Project 98," by Tim Pyron), cited in the previous Office Action, teaches customizing the display of data fields of project data on a task-by-task basis, as is now claimed.

In response, the Examiner respectfully submits – as admitted in the interview of June 28, 2006 – that Schanel does not teach or suggest allowing a user to customize the display of project data on a task-by-task basis, such that a first graphical element representing a first task comprises different data fields and a different layout of data fields than a second graphical element representing a second task. However, the amended claims do not entail such a limitation, i.e. the amended claim language does not necessarily require different data fields and a different layout of data fields amongst graphical representations of project tasks. The broadest, most reasonable interpretation of the amended claim language (i.e. "whereby the user can customize the display of the data fields of the project data on a task-by-task basis") requires only that the user can

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change the display of data fields such that the display of the data fields of a first task is different from the display of the data fields of other tasks.

And Schanel teaches such a feature. Schanel demonstrates that data fields of a first task can be displayed differently from data fields of other tasks. For example, in FIG. 2 of Schanel, the data fields (i.e. "Task," "Manhours," "Cost") display different data for each task, as per the user's input (see e.g. 15, lines 39-50). Schanel thus teaches customizing the display of data fields, and particularly the data displayed within the data fields, on a task-by-task basis.

Accordingly, the Applicants' arguments have been fully considered, but are not persuasive.

In addition, the Examiner respectfully notes that Microsoft Project 98 also teaches allowing a user to customize the display of data fields on a task-by-task basis: the format (e.g. font) of the fields may be different for each task (see e.g. page 700), and the selection of which task fields to display and the position of task fields may be different for each task (see e.g. pages 712-713). Thus, though not necessary at this time, Microsoft Project 98 may be applied to teach customizing the display (e.g. layout) of data fields on a task-by-task basis.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 29, there is no antecedent basis for "the data fields." As claims 30-34

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depend on claim 29, and include all of the limitations of claim 29, claims 30-34 are similarly rejected.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 19-22, 24-30, and 32-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,704,028, which is attributed to Schanel et al. In general, Schanel presents a method for creating graphics charts having data fields displayed therein (for example, see column 3, line 55 – column 4, line 19).

Regarding claim 19, Schanel teaches providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, each task being defined by a plurality of data fields (for example, see column 4, lines 4-19; column 13, line 16 – column 14, line 56; and figure 2). Schanel demonstrates that such project data may be displayed in a chart, with each task displayed as a graphical element, and with the plurality of data fields associated with the task being displayed within the graphical element (for example, see figure 2). Schanel further discloses that the user may select one of these graphical elements (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16), and select from amongst various displayed options for reformatting the selected graphical element: the user may modify the shape and/or border of the graphical element (for example, see column 7, lines

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7-16), the user may add or remove each of the data fields from within the graphical element (see column 14, lines 1-10), and that the user may move the location of data fields within the element (for example, see column 14, line 56 – column 15, line 22). The resulting graphical element is displayed according to the selected options, whereby the user can customize the data fields of each graphical element on a task-by-task basis (for example, see column 15, lines 39-50 and figure 2: the user can enter different data into the fields for each task, thus customizing the display of the fields). Accordingly, Schanel teaches: providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, each task being defined by a plurality of data fields (for example, see column 4, lines 4-19; column 13, line 16 – column 14, line 56; and figure 2); displaying a graphical representation of the provided project data, wherein a task is represented as a graphical element displayed in a first format, the first format of the graphical element including a first border surrounding a first set of cells arranged in a first layout, the first set of cells being configured to display a first set of data fields of the task (for example, see figure 2); receiving from a user a selection of the graphical element representing the task (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16); displaying options for formatting the selected graphical element (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16; column 14, lines 1-10; and column 14, line 56 – column 15, line 22); receiving from the user a selection of a second format for the selected graphical element, the second format including a second border surrounding a second set of cells arranged in a second layout different from the first layout, the second set of cells being configured to display a second set of data fields of the task different from the first set of data fields (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16; column 14, lines 1-10; and column 14, line 56 – column 15, line 22); and representing the selected graphical element in the selected second format whereby

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the user can customize the display of the data fields of the project data on a task-by-task basis (for example, see column 15, lines 39-50 and figure 2). Schanel thus teaches a method like that of claim 19, which is for customizing a graphical representation of project data.

Concerning claim 29, Schanel teaches that the above-described method may be implemented via a program stored in the memory of a computer (for example, see column 5, line 38 – column 6, line 19). Such a computer memory used to implement the above-described method of Schanel is considered a “computer-readable medium” like that recited in claim 29.

As per claim 20, Schanel discloses that the user may add particular data fields for display within a graphical element (see column 14, lines 1-10). Accordingly, if data fields are added, the above-described second set of cells comprises more cells configured to display the second set of data fields than the first set of cells.

Concerning claim 21, Schanel demonstrates that at least one of the first and second sets of cells may include a label, i.e. a field name (for example, see column 15, lines 1-9).

With respect to claims 22 and 30, it is understood that the charts of Schanel may be saved, with each graphical element in their current format, so that they may be re-displayed at a later time, as is well known in the art (for example, see column 13, lines 52-62). That is, an association between the task represented by a selected graphical element and a selected second format may be stored so that when the graphical representation of the provided project data is re-displayed, the graphical element for the task can be displayed in the selected second format.

As per claims 24-26 and 32-33, Schanel discloses displaying options for formatting a selected graphical element, the options being displayed via a dialog box for specifying a style of a graphical element (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16), and a separate dialog box for

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specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed (for example, see column 13, line 63 -column 15, line 22).

Concerning claims 27 and 34, Schanel discloses that the dialog box for specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed displays an indication of pre-existing templates for display of data (for example, see the dialog box of figure 10).

As per claim 28, Schanel demonstrates that each task has data variables (for example, see figure 2), and discloses that the user may add or remove each of these data variables from within graphical elements representing tasks. That is, the above-described selected second format specifies the data variables of the task whose values are to be displayed within the selected graphical representation.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 23, 31, and 35-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the U.S. Patent of Schanel, which is described above, and also over Microsoft Project 98 (hereafter referred to as "Microsoft Project"), as described by Tim Pyron in the book entitled "Using Microsoft Project 98."



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Regarding claims 23, 31, and 35, Schanel teaches a method by which the user may generate charts of project data, as is described above. Specifically, as described above in the rejection for e.g. claims 19 and 29, Schanel teaches: providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, each task being defined by a plurality of data fields; displaying a graphical representation of the provided project data, wherein a task is represented as a graphical element displayed in a first format, the first format of the graphical element including a first border surrounding a first set of cells arranged in a first layout, the first set of cells being configured to display a first set of data fields of the task; receiving from a user a selection of the graphical element representing the task; displaying options for formatting the selected graphical element; receiving from the user a selection of a second format for the selected graphical element, the second format including a second border surrounding a second set of cells arranged in a second layout different from the first layout, the second set of cells being configured to display a second set of data fields of the task different from the first set of data fields; and representing the selected graphical element in the selected second format whereby the user can customize the display of the data fields of the project data on a task-by-task basis. Schanel, however, does not explicitly disclose that the user may customize the data fields on a category-by-category basis, i.e. Schanel does not explicitly disclose that the user may select a category of tasks, and select a particular format, whereby in result, the data fields of the tasks assigned to the selected category are re-displayed in the particular format, as is expressed in claims 23, 31, and 35. Nevertheless, as disclosed by Pyron, Microsoft Project is a computer-implemented project management tool executed to generate and implement a project plan, including a schedule of tasks to be accomplished in a particular sequence (see “Why You Should

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Use Microsoft Project,” beginning on page 2). Like the program of Schanel, Microsoft Project may be used to generate a chart of project data, wherein a task is displayed as a graphical element, e.g. as a text field (for example, see pages 50-53; and pages 225-237). Regarding the claimed invention, Microsoft Project also provides the ability to format such text fields representing tasks according to the category of the task. Project specifically teaches, via a “Text Styles” dialog box: receiving from the user a selection of a category; receiving from the user a selection of a third format; and re-displaying the data fields of the tasks assigned to the selected category in the selected third format (see pages 697-700). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Schanel and Microsoft Project before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the tasks of Schanel such that the user may select a category of tasks, and a third format for this category of tasks, wherein response, data fields of tasks assigned to the selected category are re-displayed in the selected third format, as is done by Microsoft Project. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize such a combination because formatting a chart of project data according to the categories of tasks would allow the user to better perceive the different categories of tasks, and how they relate, as is demonstrated by Microsoft Project.

As per claim 36, Schanel discloses that the user may add particular data fields for display within a graphical element (see column 14, lines 1-10). Accordingly, if data fields are added, the above-described second set of cells comprises more cells configured to display the second set of data fields than the first set of cells.

Concerning claim 37, Schanel demonstrates that at least one of the first and second sets of cells may include a label, i.e. a field name (for example, see column 15, lines 1-9).

With respect to claim 38, it is understood that the charts of Schanel may be saved, with each graphical element in their current format, so that they may be re-displayed at a later time, as is well known in the art (for example, see column 13, lines 52-62). That is, an associated between the task represented by a selected graphical element and a selected second format may be stored so that when the graphical representation of the provided project data is re-displayed, the graphical element for the task can be displayed in the selected second format.

As per claims 39-41, Schanel discloses displaying options for formatting a selected graphical element, the options being displayed via a dialog box for specifying a style of a graphical element (for example, see column 7, lines 7-16), and a separate dialog box for specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed (for example, see column 13, line 63 -column 15, line 22).

As per claim 42, Schanel demonstrates that each task has data variables (for example, see figure 2), and discloses that the user may add or remove each of these data variables from within graphical elements representing tasks. That is, the above-described selected second format specifies the data variables of the task whose values are to be displayed within the selected graphical representation of tasks assigned to the selected category.

### ***Conclusion***


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blaine Basom whose telephone number is (571) 272-4044. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kristine Kincaid can be reached on (571) 272-4063. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

btb  
10/26/2006

  
**TADESSE HAILU**  
*Patent Examiner*